(b) The fire broke out on 26th May, 2001 at 1430 hours onboard INS Amba, submarine depot ship, undergoing refit at Cochin Shipyard Ltd. Two non-defence civilians were killed. Prima facie it is believed that the dhobi onboard ship, directly requested one of the welders from the shipyard to undertake some welding jobs for fixing a bracket in his compartment. This was done ignoring the safety norms for welding activities on ship. The stationery stores in the adjoining cabin probably caught fire through conduction of heat due to high temperature. The dhobi is believed to have been suffocated and died, on the spot whereas his assistant standing near him succumbed reaching the hospital.

(c) and (d) Inquiry in this matter has since been ordered and it is in progress. The existing rules provide for prevention of such eventualities and the enforcements of these rules has been emphasized. Preventive measures are reviewed from time to time for strict enforcement to avoid such happenings.

Expenditure on Arms, Equipments and Weapons

505. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government would spend a staggering US$ 95 billion on arms, equipments and weapons during the next 15 years;

(b) whether out of this, US$ 20 billion would be on the development of its nuclear weapons, command and control structure; and

(c) if so, whether Government have assessed the impact of this on our plans to alleviate poverty from the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) Government has not made any long-term planning of spending a staggering US$ 95 billion on arms, equipments and weapons during the next 15 years.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No occasion has arisen to make such an assessment.

Purchase of AJT Hawk Aircraft

506. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to abandon its plan to purchase AJT Hawk Aircraft after over ten years of negotiation and go for the Russian MIG-AT;